

Remarks

Claims 12-16 are pending. Claim 12 has been amended to incorporate a property of the soil treatment composition described on page 4, line 3. Claim 15 has been amended to incorporate subject matter described in claim 1. New claim 16 is supported by the Specification on page 8, line 6. No new matter has been added.

The Examiner rejects claim 15 under 35 U.S.C. 112(2) as being indefinite for referring to a canceled claim. The applicable subject matter from claim 1 has been incorporated into claim 15 to overcome this rejection. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his 112 rejection of claim 15.

The Examiner rejects claims 12-14 under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over published European patent application 586,911 ("EP '911"). The Examiner asserts that EP '911 discloses a method for treating solid with a composition containing both an anionic polymer and an ionic fertilizer. The Examiner asserts that the intrinsic viscosity is an inherent function of the anionic polymers shown in EP '911. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claim 12 is drawn to a process comprising adding an aqueous soil treatment composition to water and irrigating an area of soil with the mixture of water and soil treatment composition. The soil treatment composition comprises (a) an ionic water-soluble fertilizer in an amount of at least 10 weight percent, and (b) a water-soluble anionic polymer with has intrinsic viscosity of at least 6 dl/g and is formed from water-soluble monomer or monomer blend of which at least 40 weight percent is anionic monomer. Furthermore, claim 12 now provides that the resulting soil treatment composition is diluted upon addition to water, which is prior to irrigation.

EP '911 suggests combinations of an agricultural nutrient, such as urea-formaldehyde fertilizer, and a (co)polymer. EP '911 indicates that the polymer should preferably have a molecular weight from about 200,000 to 15 million. More importantly, the compositions taught in EP '911 gel in the presence of water. EP '911 emphasizes the gelling characteristics since the intent is the formation of a chemical grout for soil stabilization. There is no possibility of the compositions being diluted upon addition to water as recited in claim 12. EP '911 does not contemplate and certainly does not teach

one skilled in the art how to arrive at a composition that is diluted upon addition to water. For these reasons, Applicants submit that the teachings in EP '911 fail to render the claimed process unpatentable. Applicants request that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw his obviousness rejection of the pending claims in view of EP '911.

Applicants submit that the present invention is ready for allowance. In the event that minor amendments will further prosecution, Applicants request that the Examiner contact the undersigned representative.

Respectfully submitted,



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Amended Claims with underlining and bracketing

12. (twice amended) A soil treatment process comprising adding an aqueous soil treatment composition comprising:

(a) an ionic water-soluble fertilizer in an amount of at least 10 weight percent, and

(b) a water-soluble anionic polymer with has intrinsic viscosity of at least 6 dl/g and is formed from water-soluble monomer or monomer blend of which at least 40 weight percent is anionic monomer,

to water, the composition being thereby diluted, and irrigating an area of soil with the water.

15. (amended) A method for the production of an aqueous soil treatment composition ~~as defined in claim 1~~ comprising providing an aqueous solution of at least 10 wt% ionic water soluble fertilizer (a) and mixing it with polymer (b), said polymer (b) being a water soluble anionic polymer which has an intrinsic viscosity of at least 6 dl/g and is formed from water soluble monomer or monomer blend of which at least 40% is anionic monomer, in powder form.

16. (new) A soil treatment process as claimed in claim 12, wherein the composition has, before dilution, a viscosity below 4000 cPs.